

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1 and 24 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:  
a first information extraction step of extracting first information, including a registration signal used to correct the geometrical distortion of an image; and  
a determination step of employing the results obtained at said first information extraction step to determine whether a process for extracting ~~second~~ digital watermark information from said image is to be performed.

2. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information and said second information are embedded in said image as invisible or less visible electronic watermarks.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising:  
a division step of dividing said image into at least one block; and  
a selection step of selecting said block.

4. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information indicates that said image includes a specific image.

5. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said second information is additional information.

6. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information and said second information are added to components of said image that are less easily discerned by a human's eyes.

7. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said first information is information used to identify a paper currency, securities, a copyrighted image or others.

8. (Original) A method according to Claim 4, wherein said specific image is a paper currency, and said second information indicates at least either an issuance country or the value of said paper currency.

9. (Original) A method according to Claim 4, further comprising:  
a determination step of determining whether said specific image is included,  
wherein, when said specific image is included, an image process is performed  
based on said image.

10. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said method is performed by a printer driver.

11. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the amount of said first information is smaller than the amount of said second information.

12. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the embedment depth of said first information relative to said image is greater than the embedment depth of said second information.

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the time required for the extraction of said first information is shorter than the time required for the extraction of said second information.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the number of sets of said first information present in the unit area is greater than the number of sets of said second information.

15. (Withdrawn) An image processing method comprising:  
an input step of inputting image data;  
a block division step of dividing said image data into at least one first block,  
and at least one second block;  
a block selection step of selecting said first block, and selecting said second  
block;  
a first information extraction step of extracting first information from said first

block that is selected;

an information extraction judgement step of employing said first information to determine whether second information is to be extracted;

a second information extraction step of extracting said second information from said selected second block in accordance with the determination at said information extraction judgement step; and

a control step of controlling an apparatus in accordance with the result obtained at said second information extraction step.

16. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 15, wherein said first information and said second information are embedded as electronic watermark information.

17. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 15, wherein the amount of said first information is smaller than the amount of said second information.

18. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 15, wherein the embedment depth of said first information relative to said image is greater than the embedment depth of said second information.

19. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 15, wherein the number of said first blocks is greater than the number of said second blocks.

20. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 15, further comprising:  
a re-extraction judgement step of employing the results obtained at said  
information extraction judgement step to determine whether said first information is to be  
re-extracted.

21. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 20, wherein, at said  
re-extraction judgement step, whether said first information is to be re-extracted is  
determined in accordance with the number of times said first information extraction step is  
performed.

22. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 15, further comprising:  
a color spatial transformation step of employing the determination at said  
information extraction judgement step to perform a color spatial transformation, or a tone  
transformation step of employing the determination at said information extraction  
judgement step to perform a tone transformation.

23. (Withdrawn) A method according to Claim 15, wherein said first  
information is one-bit electronic watermark information indicating a specific image is  
included.

24. (Currently Amended) An image processing method comprising:  
a first information extraction step of extracting, from an image, first information indicating that said image is a specific image; and  
a determination step of employing the results obtained at said first information extraction step to determine whether a process for extracting ~~second~~ digital watermark information from said image is to be performed.

25. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information and said second information are embedded in said image as invisible or less visible electronic watermarks.

26. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, further comprising:  
a division step of dividing said image into at least one block; and a selection step of selecting at least one block.

27. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the amount of said first information is smaller than the amount of said second information.

28. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the embedment depth of said first information relative to said image is greater than the embedment depth of said second information.

29. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the time required for the extraction of said first information is shorter than the time required for the extraction of said second information.

30. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said specific image is an image of a paper currency or securities.

31. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information and said second information are added to components of said image that are less easily discerned by a human's eyes.

32. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said first information is information used to identify a paper currency or securities.

33. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein said specific image is a paper currency, and said second information indicates at least either an issuance country or the value of said paper currency.

34. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, further comprising:  
a determination step of determining whether said specific image is included,  
wherein, when said specific image is included, an image process is performed  
based on said image.

35. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, which is performed by a printer driver.

36. (Original) A method according to Claim 24, wherein the number of sets of said first information present in the unit area is greater than the number of sets of said second information.